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"friends," particularly if they occupy one's own generation; one's father's relatives, even his brothers, become "my father's friends." A "distant friend" refers not to distance in space but to that in cousinship.

Before we detail the individuals included within this category, let us make two points clear. The first of these is directly associated with the dominance of the father within the family. He comes, as it were, to stand for the group which he heads; the farm is known by his name, and wife and children bear his name likewise. For the Irish family is patrilocal and patronymic, to use the technical terms. Farm, house, and most of the household goods descend from father to son with the patronym; we shall follow their general movement in a later section.

This patrilineal descent gives a certain accent upon the kinship system; it chooses one line of descent out of the many possible and gives those who make it up a common name. There is a reflection of this fact in the groupings of Irish rural life. To outsiders a person may be known as "a boy of the Shannons" or a "man of the Flaherties," but in a sense these groupings are merely linguistic conveniences. For in many cases two families of Shannons may live side by side, yet not be considered "friends." None of the obligations of kinship bind them. For in the phrase of the countryman: "They are not the same Shannons or, if they are, they are too far out."

Our examination of the various ways of reckoning kinship will make the statement clear. Patriliny is merely one device, an extension of the father-son relationship, by which individuals are included in one's group of "friends."

A second observation upon the kinship system springs from the fact that the family relationships regulate sexual conduct. Indeed, our examination of farm agriculture leads us to see that the technological training of the individual goes hand in hand with the sexual. Marriage prohibitions,

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like the sanctions of the exercise of sexual rights in marriage, are part of and take their form in the family group. Consequently, in the wider and larger alignments of individuals springing from the family which make up the kinship system, similar prohibitions occur.

For the kindred are the group within which marriage is prohibited. In a sense the formulation of the individuals in it as a group is an abstraction. Kinship bonds come ready formed to the newborn human being. The child is soon brought to know and adopt requisite behavior and sentiments toward the individuals with whom the other persons of his family are reciprocally bound.

Thus the Irish child very early meets his mother's and father's brothers and sisters; he runs errands and receives small gifts from them; as soon as he is able he carries presents. In later years of boyhood he does odd jobs for them; his labor is lent at cooring; he takes his place with them at the family table or round the hearth on visiting. At various times of crisis in his career, such as First Communion, Confirmation, and marriage, he receives gifts from them which signalize the intimacy between him and them. They share his parent's superordination to him, for they belong to the same older generation as his parents.

He is very likely, too, to be thrown constantly with their children, especially if they are substantially of the same age, where his uncles and aunts remain within visiting distance. In country regions, such as Luogh, nearly all of the families are united by complicated, reduplicated bonds of marriage and descent. There the boys and girls grow up together in constant association, both as "friends" and companions. It is with them that the natural course of development creates bonds of sentiment and mutual aid, quite like those within the family, which take the form of that "friendliness" at once obligatory and pleasurable seen in the account of farm work.

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are *mac mhic, mac inghine, inghean mhic, inghean inghine,* 601
respectively (i.e., son's son, daughter's son, son's daughter, and daughter's daughter).

Father's and mother's siblings' children are called, as in English, cousins, or more specifically first cousins, a classificatory term without distinction in sex. The term, however, is never used as a term of address. In fact, "returned Yanks" who bring back the American usage of prefixing the word to the name of their "friends" in address are ridiculed. The word seems to be slightly foreign to the brogue. "Friend" is the usual designation, or a descriptive circumlocution is used both in Irish and English, such as "our fathers were brothers," or *clann na beirte dearbhráthar,* in which relationship is established by reference to an immediate family connection in the ascendant generation.

Irish terms for these relatives are various. The commonest is *col ceathair.* This term is interesting because it introduces the type of reckoning upon which the kinship system is built. *Col* is the term used to refer to blood relationship within which marriage is prohibited. By extension it refers to consanguinity and to an ecclesiastical impediment to marriage. Thus the phrase *cia an col atá agat leis* is used to ask, "What is the blood relationship you have with him?" and to go to the priest for a dispensation removing an impediment to marriage is known as *ceannach col* (buying *col*). Among the English-speaking countrymen of Clare the word "call," pronounced quite similarly, is likewise used to signify relationship. Thus one "friend" is said to "have a call on" another. Whether or not the words are one and the same we do not know; in any case the English word seems to refer both to the obligations and the blood relationship. 601 582

First cousins then are known in Irish as *col ceathair* or fourth *col* whenever the specific designation of these relatives is required. The choice of the numerical adjective is 601

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601 presumably determined by counting the number of individuals or, better, personalities separated by reciprocal relations within which *col* or prohibitions arise. They are, for instance, myself, my father, my father's brother, and my father's brother's son. Here the accent upon the kinship system makes use of the two consanguine reciprocals within the immediate family: parent-child and sibling-sibling. Through the working of the principle of equivalence of siblings only two generations, my father's and my own, are considered. Thus the same reference to an immediate family relationship as we saw in such circumlocutions as "our fathers were brothers" is contained in the term.

601 612 582 Another set of terms exists in Irish for reckoning these relatives. The authors have not heard it in use in Clare, however. In it, first cousins are said to be *a dó a's a dó i ngaol*. The phrase means literally "two and two in blood relationship." Here accent is placed upon the lineal father-son (parent-child) descent, for brother and sister are called *a h-aon a's a h-aon i ngaol* – that is, "one and one." The reasoning here traces back to a common parent; in the latter case there is but one step, in the former, two.

The Church uses the system embodied in this last terminology in determining consanguinity. The following slightly abridged quotation indicates that it also recognizes a different system in Roman civil law.

> The civil (Roman) law founded its degrees in the number of generations. Thus between brothers there are two degrees, between first cousins there are four. [Compare *col ceathair.*] Canon law still follows this system in determining inheritance, but the Church for marriages computes, in the collateral line of consanguinity, one series only of generations, and if the series are unequal only the longer one. Hence, the principle of canon law is there are in the transverse or collateral line as many degrees of consanguinity as there are persons in the longer line counting the common stock or root.[1]

[1] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."

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Thus brother and sister are in the first degree, uncle and niece in the second, because niece is "two degrees from grandfather." First cousins are likewise reckoned in the second degree for the same reason. Here, as in the counting *a dó a's a dó i ngaol*, the accent is upon the parent-child reciprocal. The Church calls this the *linea recta* of descent. It bases its prohibition of marriage (incest) in the *linea recta* upon divinely ordained natural law. No dispensations for this type of marriage are ever granted.[2]

Another system is perhaps commonest — at least in Clare, where the authors have met it on several occasions — among the methods used to determine kinship in order to maintain the bounds within which alliance is forbidden. It appears both in Irish and in English speech. The system reckons descent by "generations." The Irish phrase is to *réidhteach gaol* by counting *glúin*.[3] *Gaol*, we remember, is the word for blood relationship in general; *glúin* refers first to a knee joint, then by extension to a step in family descent, a generation. In this reckoning, first cousins, that is, parents' siblings' children, are said to be in the *tríumhadh glúin*, or, in English, "the third generation."

Here the accent is again upon two elements in the constellation of reciprocals within the immediate family: the parent-child reciprocal and the equivalence of siblings. By counting back to the common grandfather or grandmother the *gaol* or "blood" is determined through three generations, i.e., ego's, his father's, and his grandfather's. Each person in the line of descent seems to represent a generation. All so descended in ego's generation are "friends."

Still another system of reckoning cousinship may be contained in certain idiomatic terms for the cousins. The authors here rely only on the Irish language dictionaries, for they have not heard these terms used. First cousins are

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Cf. Canon O'Leary's *Mo Sgeul Féin*, where he has a chapter (*Mo Shinnsear*) in which he reckons his ancestry in these terms.

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son (5), and the last's son (6) who is again normally within ego's generation. By counting the common root, for instance, again patrilineally, father's father's father, four generations are counted together. These four explain the *ceathradh glúin*.

Now both the Church and Irish rural society reckon descent bilaterally; all possible roots, male and female, are counted. In that case, the count gives thirty-two kinship personalities in ego's own generation who come within this group of first and second cousins. These can all be counted as cousins or "friends." They are within the range of *col* or marriage taboo. They make up the extended family whose behavior we have examined above. Of the thirty-two, only two (father's brother's son and father's father's brother's son's son) in ego's own generation bear the same patronym as he; but the total number of personalities within the system bearing ego's patronym is nine, if the immediate progenitors back to common great-grandfather are counted.

Consanguinity is carried one step further by the Church. As a barrier to marriage, or diriment impediment, it extends to the "fourth degree." This includes the group taken from a common descent yet a generation higher. It brings in those relatives known in English as third cousins.

These include all those descendant from a common great-grand-grandparent, described in the various terminologies as "third cousins," *col ochtar* (eighth *col*), members of the *cúigeadh glúin* or fifth generation, or people *ar a trí ó*. As before, the emphasis in each of these terms is to link together all those kindred of one generation who have common descent. When all possible roots are taken into account, the personalities so linked ideally number 128. The total within the whole system, including those of all generations ascendant, bearing the same patronym as ego, is thirteen, and five contemporaneous generations are comprised.

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When these two emphases upon the kinship system are recognized, it becomes evident why there is a lack of terms describing those individuals appearing above and below ego's generation but not in the direct line. In the direct line we do have such terms as grandfather, grandson, etc., but the others do not figure. They are not named except descriptively, and even then usually only in reference to the generation which they occupy. Thus father's father's brother is called "my grandfather's brother." The term granduncle exists, but it has not found its way into the countryman's vocabulary.

Similarly, though uncle, aunt, nephew, and niece have become fully acclimated to Ireland, there is still a marked preference for descriptive terms. The son of a cousin is described in such terms, and the immediate progenitors of the cousin are thought of in terms of their place in the precedent generation. They are thus "my father's friends," though they are, of course, within ego's kinship group. In this way, two distantly removed cousins can often establish a relationship and adopt the requisite behavior to one another through establishing a more immediate connection in a parental generation.

The bounds of the consanguine group are naturally not rigid in this type of extensional structure. There is a gradation of intensity in the taboo as it extends towards the peripheral relatives. First and second cousins, to use the more convenient English terms, are tabooed, the first more strongly than the second. Third cousins, felt to be "very far out" and sometimes "not counted" by the Irish, are nevertheless formally tabooed by the Church. Yet dispensations can be obtained with relative ease for kindred of this degree. They are granted for all alliances within the system for "cause" inward even as far as first cousins and uncles and nieces, but

a different word, *dearbhrdthair*, or "true-brother," is reserved for one's father's son.

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never within the restricted family.[5] When the dispensation of the Church is obtained, there is no feeling of horror at such marriages. They are, however, always felt to be anomalous and are a matter of comment. In the country areas where there is a necessity among the farmers of keeping farms and dowries within the extended family group, or where the introduction of an outsider is difficult because of class and regional antagonisms, marriages between first and second cousins are not uncommon. Nevertheless the general feeling of the community condemns this type of union. Too close intermarriage of this type is a common charge used by townsmen in condemning the country folk. The authors unfortunately had little chance of observing such alliances in their rural setting.

At marriage the individual acquires a new group of kindred. This group is also within the marriage prohibition and the "call"; they are "friends." In the formal or ideal arrangement all those related to one's wife become related to oneself in the same degree. This is the view taken by the Catholic Church. A marriage, the doctrine goes, unites husband and wife as "one flesh." "Affinity from a true marriage is a diriment impediment to the fourth degree of consanguinity of the deceased spouse." [6] A widower "may not marry any of his deceased wife's blood relatives as far as the fourth degree of consanguinity." [7]

In other words, the union of man and woman brings a union of the two extended families from the point of view of the marrying individuals. In the eyes of the Church, the husband stands in the same relation to a wife's relatives as does the wife herself, and vice versa. So strong is this provision in the eyes of the Church that sexual intercourse with any of the wife's kin creates a barrier to the exercise of conjugal rights over the wife. A dispensation as well as

[5] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Consanguinity."
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*

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Through the workings in and out of the interlocking series of pyramids mentioned above, an isolated area of small population can soon become inextricably intertangled. Hence in the poorest and most isolated regions we find the greatest amount of intermarriage. Evidence is not definite on this score, but the indications point in that direction. As these have been generally the last regions to lose the Irish language, it is there that we find the greatest proliferation of terminologies whose purpose is to preserve the structure and to determine the precise limits set for marriages. Marriages under such conditions force a nice adjustment of reduplicated kinship bonds. Dispensations are obtained under the conditions we have mentioned, and accordingly the parish priest is made a party to every marriage, a great extension of his authority.

Through such intermingling, it very often happens that a comparatively large area will be peopled entirely by individuals standing within near degrees of kinship one to another. In such a case the local group attains the added solidarities of common kinship. To an outsider, such a group, closely integrated through kinship bonds, occupying the same general level of social stratification and the same general place in the economic system, and dominating a large or small area (sometimes as large as a parish), presents a united front. It exhibits a very effective solidarity against outsiders. It is this solidarity which gives rise to the assumption among outside observers that the clan still exists in rural Ireland. It is this solidarity, too, which expresses itself in the political cohesion of large sections of the countryside.

In the appended figure (Fig. 10) one can get a view of this reckoning of descent within this kinship system as a whole. The figure is arranged in block form and divided between left and right by male and female sex. The generations are numbered after the fashion of a checkerboard, and each block or square represents a kinship personality. Each

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coincident upon that change cannot be assigned as the sole cause of emigration.

As the decline in population has been more characteristic of the small farmers, it may be possible to associate it with social conditions pertaining among that class. They have participated in the very agricultural changes which are thought to have caused their dispersal. They enjoyed the high prosperity of the closing decades of the last century, and won the progressive reforms of agrarian tenure. Yet they continued to send forth thousands of emigrants. Fluctuating economic conditions have undoubtedly had their effect, but factors whose greatest demonstrable result is merely to stay or hurry the stream of emigration cannot be evoked as efficient causes. In taking the problem directly to the small farmer, it will become possible to sketch the social setting in which emigration takes its form.

Clearly connected with the decline in population are other demographic statistics, particularly those of marriage. They present features which are unique among civilized peoples. Inasmuch as they are again indications of an underlying uniform social pattern whose occurrences they record, it is necessary to analyze them in terms of the behavior patterns of rural Ireland. Like emigration, they are more characteristic of the country people. Springing from marriage, they are thus directly indicative of social forces within the small farmers' family economy.

Briefly stated, they present the following characteristics: In Saorstat Eireann in 1926, according to the census then conducted, there was a larger proportion of unmarried persons of all ages than in any other country for which records are kept. Marriage, furthermore, did not take place until a comparatively late age. Thus 80 per cent of males between twenty-five and thirty years of age were unmarried in 1926, 62 per cent of males thirty to thirty-five, 50 per cent of males thirty-five to forty, and 26 per cent of males fifty-five to

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sixty-five. The significance of these figures springs from their comparison with other countries. In the United States only 39 per cent of males twenty-five to thirty are unmarried, 24 per cent between thirty and thirty-five, and only 10 per cent between fifty-five and sixty-five. Denmark, an agricultural country similar in many ways to Ireland, had only 49 per cent, 25 per cent, 15 per cent, and 8 per cent of these age groups not yet benedict, respectively. In England the percentages were 45 per cent, 25 per cent, 16 per cent, and 10 per cent, a great contrast to the sister island. Indeed, in the Free State the percentages of unmarried among the males of each age group are usually double those of other countries.

Unmarried females are also very numerous, though not so excessively so as is the case with the males. In the age groups twenty-five to thirty, thirty to thirty-five, thirty-five to forty, and fifty-five to sixty-five the percentages are respectively 62 per cent, 42 per cent, 32 per cent, and 24 per cent. In Denmark the same groups showed only 39 per cent, 25 per cent, 19 per cent, and 14 per cent; in England, 41 per cent, 26 per cent, 20 per cent, and 15 per cent. Figure 11 gives a graphic comparison between the Irish Free State and three other modern countries.

Later marriage and high incidence of bachelorhood is, like population decline, more pronounced among the country people. And among them, it is highest in those areas where small holdings prevail. In County Clare 88 per cent of the males between twenty-five and thirty in rural districts were unmarried. This percentage is not abnormally high for Ireland, as Sligo, Galway, Mayo, and Leitrim, areas of small holdings, have 90 per cent and Roscommon 91 per cent. In Clare 90 per cent of women between twenty and twenty-five were unmarried, yet six western counties have higher percentages than Clare's.

In fact the thickly populated and poorer western counties

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162 70 per cent and 50 per cent. There is a general tendency: the larger the town, the earlier marriage takes place. En-
● 582 nis, the largest town and county seat of Clare (6,000), has a
589 somewhat lower percentage than is usual for towns of its size in Ireland. In fact, Clare's figures, 60 per cent and 30 per cent in those age grades, are better even than those for such a metropolis as Cork City, with 68 per cent and 40 per cent.

Correlations of occupation and marital status [3] support the assumption that the longest delay in marriage is found among the small farmers. Both agricultural laborers and town laborers marry younger and in greater numbers proportionately. No other occupational class, not even the professional class, delays marriage so long or has so many celibate members.

162 These facts obviously relate themselves to the population
163 decline. They are, as it were, two different symptoms of the same condition. But strangely enough in a declining population, fecundity is very high. Although there are fewer married women of childbearing age per 1,000 inhabitants than in other countries (74 in Ireland, 142 in the United States, 125 in Germany, 112 in Denmark, 121 in England, and 119 in Italy), the fertility of these women is remarkably high. For every 100 married women under 45, there are 131 children under five years of age, compared with only 77 in the United States, 71 in England, 93 in Denmark, and 75 in Germany. The number of children is higher again in western counties of Ireland than in eastern. The women of Clare under 45 produced 140 children for every 100 married women, those of Donegal 152, but in County Dublin and County Wicklow, the two eastern counties, only 122 and 124. In spite of this great fecundity there is, however, in Ireland only a normal proportion of children under 15, if Ireland is compared to other countries. The

[3] *Census of Population, 1926*, vol. V, part II: Ages and Conjugal Conditions.

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583 figure. In either case, when a suitable boy or girl has been
584 found, the farmer sends an emissary to his or her parent. The relative value of the farms and the "fortune" that a farmer will give for his daughter are generally pretty well known in the district, but where the two families are comparative strangers, or belong to different localities, the role of the emissary in laying the proposals of one set of parents before the other is more important. The emissary is not a relative of either party ordinarily. Certain individuals become well known locally as successful negotiators. In former days there was once a fully developed "matchmaker" or marriage broker. The office is said to exist still in Connemara, but it has died out in Clare.

584 Quite often a well-known shopkeeper or local politician comes to play the role. One in particular in Ennistymon (a market town of 1,200) came under the author's notice. The back room of his public house reserved for special customers became one of the centers of local matchmaking. It was there that the fathers of both boy and girl would meet and "sit on the match." Their deliberation, to the accompaniment of many bottles of stout, threshes out the whole matter of the disposal of the properties involved,
● [582] the relative status of the families, and any possible barriers to the union, such as consanguinity, insanity, or notorious crime in past ancestry.

584 The bargaining is a matter of nice adjustment between
583 the "fortune" and the farm. The custom known as "walking the land," referred to above, insures that the farm is roughly equivalent to the fortune, though each party strives for a higher valuation of its own claims. Thus, where a fortune of five hundred pounds has finally been agreed upon, the girl's father will have offered only four hundred and the boy's will have held out for six hundred, instancing all the prospects and advantages of his farm in support of his figure. Finally, through the offices of the intermediary

of the farm on the stipulation that his brother should marry. The brother thus got wife, dowry, and farm; and the identity of land and family was preserved for a new generation.

Time and time again that continuity of identification lies at the root of the behavior which follows upon the transference of control within a family.

Particularly in the case of the incomplete farm families, a wide variety of arrangements appear to effect the same transition without going beyond the group. As the following generality explains, it is only the "crabbit" farmer who breaks through the circle of reciprocal obligation:

> If there is no heir to hold the land, they [the childless couple] might give it to a friend, the nearest to the husband, or the wife might give it to the nearest to her. The husband might take a boy from his brother or, if he's crabbit, he will sell it and go to town and drink the money.

But the second contingency that the wife might give the land to one of her kindred may be a source of trouble. The great emphasis upon patriliny militates against it. As the countrymen say, they "want to keep the name on the house; they are dying to have the same name on the house."

At any rate some of the matches between cousins arise, consciously or not, because of this desire. And they occur here and there in country districts, even though the full weight of the Church's authority is against them. Countrymen on occasion have explained that they are love-matches. By impregnating the girl, the boy forces the priest to allow the marriage "for cause." Soberer opinion, nevertheless, condemns such action. It is no light thing to "destroy a girl's character."

There are many more subtle ways of effecting the same end. Nieces and nephews, even grandchildren, may be brought into the house, and matches made for them. In this regard a conflict arises between legal right and social custom. The country districts recognize only vaguely the

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573 521 how to drive a shrewd bargain. But his role at *cuaird* is not a weighty one. Noonan is a very voluble man. He can be counted upon at all times to enliven the gathering with many opinions on all subjects. His volubility makes him more vulnerable than the rest to the public prosecutor's relentless logic, but it helps too to keep the conversation alive and active. Consequently, though he has no important title, he is a member of long standing.

573 592 The younger of the two sitting in back is John Quin. His position is a little anomalous, though he is a Rynamona man by birth and blood. Quin lives on a good farm just outside the village. He married-in there, taking over the [582] place of a dead husband. But, true to the country custom, it was not the widow he married. She brought in a sister, who, in turn, married Quin. But both women are still living in the house. The elder sister has become the "old woman" and is treated more like a parent than a contemporary. It is Quin and his wife, the younger sister, who work the farm and who regard it as their own. Their claim is a perfect one, were it not for one misfortune: they are childless at fifty.

573 561 Quin is thus neither fully a young man nor fully an old one, as the countryside reckons age status. His place in the evening gathering reflects this intermediate state. In the two years in which the authors had the old men's house at Rynamona under observation, Quin was going through a transition. It was one which he could not describe himself, but which showed itself well in his behavior.

573 561 521 When we first came, Quin divided his evenings between the old men's house and card playing in several of the young men's gathering places. At one of these, to be described shortly, he was an important figure. His pronouncements were listened to with respect. He had "weight," and he conducted himself importantly and showed a serious demeanor and a little disdain for frivolous pursuits. In the

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It has already been pointed out that the census figures available at the time of the fieldwork on which this book is based are those of the Irish census of 1926. Since that time some at least of the figures based on the succeeding decennial census, that of 1936, have become available. There are also a number of annual statistics which bear on the questions of Irish population. It is interesting to turn to these for the light they throw on subsequent development in the trends we have noted.

The release of the 1936 census figures in 1939 showed conclusively that the demographic trends that have marked Ireland since Famine times continue to persist. Neither the years of the establishment of the Free State up to 1932 nor the years of depression, economic war, and the experimental programs of the De Valera regime since then have affected the trends. Any of the charts prepared for the 1926 figures needs only to be extrapolated along the trend line a few points to show the situation of ten years later.

Stated briefly, these trends recapitulate and reëmphasize the points we have already made. Emigration continues to mark the life of the country, draining the countryside first into the towns and second overseas, now to Great Britain rather than across the oceans. Ireland continues to hold its record of possessing the highest percentage of unmarried men and women in the world. The population over sixty-five years of age continues to rise. The population of children continues to fall. Marriages continue to be fertile, by comparison with many other countries. But they still tend to become fewer and fewer, and the delay of marriage into middle life grows longer and longer. The ratio of females to males continues to fall, until in 1936 there were 975 males for every 935 females in Ireland, the lowest sex ratio in Europe and one of the lowest in the world.

These figures mark the continued existence of the familistic order we have discussed. They mark as well the continuance of its struggle to fit modern life. Perhaps a figure

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582 in the report of the Registrar-General for 1938 gives the best illustration of the culmination of the trends that mark this struggle. In that year slightly over half of all women who married (and only a negligible number of them were not making first marriages) were between thirty-five and forty-five years of age. The problem of delay in marriages seems to be reaching some sort of climax.

161 178 It is interesting to speculate what that climax might be and what future trend of demography it may inaugurate. It is obvious that the conditions these figures point to, rooted as they are in the social order of the countryside and of the nation, are in any case beyond the reach of ordinary measures. They have marked, as we have seen, every Irish administration since Famine days, whether native or not. They are not matters of "poverty" within the reach of immediate economic policies. If "poverty" refers to hunger and an absolute low level of living, the concept does not apply at all. If it denotes rather relative standing within a community of certain values, it has some meaning. But such meaning waits for its understanding on a realization of the form of family and community these values express.

Yet the old cry about a flight from the land has arisen in Ireland once again. Until the outbreak of war in 1939, the population question, linked now with continuing unemployment in the towns and a shortage of labor in the agricultural districts, had become a football of politics once more. The new small local factories of the regime of industrialization now have their place in the controversy. The opposition in the *Dáil* are bitter against a program they believe subsidizes industry at home out of the farmer's pocket, yet leaves him unable to employ the hands his farm requires. The government finds itself in a quandary. To accept the opposition view would be to admit itself responsible for a condition far beyond its control. To put a stop to the program of industrialization would leave the incoming farm

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town, or to the fair, or only making the evening *cuaird* or visit. The obligations pattern good-fellowship and holiday, for friends treat one another when they meet near a pub. In fact one countryman complained to me that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his friends, but others seem to manage their obligations better.

And lastly, the obligations of kinship are a bulwark against disaster. The Johnny mentioned above sent the cow down when it was badly needed. If you have read the book from the Blaskets called *The Islandman*, you remember that the Islandman might not marry the girl of his choice because she was a mainlander and the friends she would bring him would be too far away from Great Blasket when he needed aid. In the system of reciprocal duties which surround kinship, much of the strength of the countryside against external destruction and internal disaster is explained.

We have followed the countryman a long way. In watching him at his work, we have begun to recognize the outlines of the way of life which is his. He is a subsistence farmer, as we now call the peasant, but he is more. He is part of an intricate social system which patterns his life along definite channels, which brings him rewards, gives him incentives, and deals its own punishments. The traditional patterns of old custom have a place in this system; folklore surrounds it as in the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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167 the normal, small farmers' flow from country to town—the other, overseas. As this group, the small farmers, is overwhelmingly the most numerous in the land, the drain has taxed it most.

582 But the small farmers, the country-people, are the very group who exhibit most strongly another statistical peculiarity. They set the norm for the country in marital statistics. In this, the Irish Free State occupies a unique place. Marriage takes place at a later age than in any other country for which records are kept. Sixty-two per cent of all males between the ages of thirty to thirty-five are still unmarried. Nor is it only the men who escape matrimony so long. Forty-two per cent of all women who reach that age of middle life are single. In the United States, in England, in Denmark, in all other countries in fact, there is no such long delay in marrying. In all three of the countries named, comparative figures for both men and women do not reach 25 per cent. Only in Ireland is a single man or woman of thirty the rule rather than the exception.

But it is not a question merely of the Irishman's hanging back a little longer from an inescapable fate. For a surprising number escape altogether. One man out of every four men who reach fifty in Ireland is still a bachelor. And though the women have slightly better luck in finding mates, the same figure holds for them.

Other countries usually delay marriage longest in the urban professional classes. But in Ireland, it is

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the country-people who marry latest. One can range the country in something of a scale in this regard. The more numerous in a county the numbers of small holdings, roughly, the later marriage takes place, and the greater number of bachelors, particularly males, of all ages, there are. Late marriage and bachelorhood are characteristics today of the countryman's way of life.

In the problem presented by these statistics, the structural approach to the countryman's way of life can bring a new illumination. It throws into relief the human setting in which economic and historical changes have run their course.

After the terrible disaster of the Famine, agriculture underwent a change. Canadian and Argentine wheat forced Irish land into cattle production. The great land clearances took place, turning out the population to make way for pasture. Then the small farmer followed the large into pasturage for dry cattle, on a lesser scale, and the milch cow declined. Small towns and crossroads distributing centres and the railroads sprang up all through the country; and abroad, the roaring industrial expansion, first of England and then of America, gave opportunities denied at home. Through all this: through curtailment of employment at home, through substitution of cattle for men upon the land, through denial of local opportunity, the stream of emigration kept its steady flow.

Through all this, too, the figures of Irish mar-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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riage kept pace. Age of marriage was normal in the year of the first census. In 1841 there was a normally low percentage of the unmarried in the population, and men and women married as early as they do in the United States today. At each decennial census afterwards, marriage was a little later and the unmarried a little more numerous. Through all the welter of changes, the figures grew steadily toward wider and wider spread celibacy.

Then when the economic and political tides turned, the human setting still endured. The clearances ceased; land reform won security of tenure; years of prosperity after 1870 brought an income that could be used more and more at home, as lowered rents spread and freehold was assured. Finally, the war brought undreamed-of prosperity and on its heels the strength for revolution and civil war. The milch cow came back to a position from which it had only retreated very little; dairying could be organized and come to vie with beef cattle as a market outlet. Finally, as a last step, industry began to make its call at home.

In all this flow of circumstance who can say what factor determined the numerical count of Irish population? Emigration went on as before, checked this year, hurried the next, until, perhaps from external check, the flow grew less and less.[1]

[1] Preliminary reports of the current (1936) census indicate emigration still continues, though now largely directed toward Great Britain rather than overseas.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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On the other hand, the corollary check on the population—late marriage—did not lag. It still grew. In the census of 1911 it reached its peak and has held it since. It alone shows no sign of falling-off in response to new economics and better days. For a social system is no brittle, changeable thing. Its adjustments to change and circumstance are a lesson, not in economics, but in the tenacity of human sentiment and human habit. Late marriage in Ireland can be associated with the reluctance of the old couple to renounce their leadership. It is part of the long struggle to acquire means to portion children. The closed corporation of the family cannot be dispersed until it is possible to establish a new one. The self-sufficiency of the group makes it always difficult to destroy. And now, today, the identification of a single family with a single individual farm prevents the setting up of more than one new group upon the land.

So, when subdivision of holdings ceased after the Famine, Irish familism made its adaptation. The local community could not any longer settle its sons at home; it could no longer divide its land among them. Yet, unless it were to die it must live on. I say must, for a social system is co-extensive with the lives of its members. The Polynesians, in their island paradises, might die out nation by nation when their culture crashed, bled by a malady stronger than foreign germs or foreign guns. The Irish countrymen were tougher.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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In living on, the system could still mould the lives of its members. As prosperity arrived, and land agitation fixed the attention of the farmer, 'land' became more and more a central value. Irish rural familism felt more and more strongly the threefold identification of 'land', 'blood' and local standing. Where land, alliance and prestige all follow the same lines, in marriage, the group finds its coherence in, and centres its tightly woven bonds round, that crucial reorganization of social life.

So, the 'landless' and the 'backward' must die out. In rural Ireland, however, it is not men but families which are so forced to their deaths. "Backward places do not grow big fortunes", we remember. That homely phrase is full of social meaning. The all-too-human drives for social rise, for prestige, leave them behind and marriageless. And in a familistic world, celibacy leads to extinction.

With the homely phrase we enter a new field in social life, yet one just as central to the way of rural Ireland. This is the broad area of social stratification. Under the awkward term are subsumed the judgments man makes among his fellows upon rank, upon prestige, upon inferiority and superiority, and the behaviours that embody them. All societies exhibit them; all organize them in one way or another. Even the animals show analogous behaviours. They practise dominance and submit

S.Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 though little wealth will come to her through that
443 shop door. But in the scheme of social emphases,
571 these courses are the exceptions. Practically, for a
584 finally successful adaptation, the man must rise through an economic apprenticeship. His is the bread-winning role in social life. Only the bride regularly marries into her new station.

171 We are dealing here with a social form of nearly
369 universal occurrence where a society preserves
443 some trace of patriarchal form. It is a structural
571 necessity where class lines cross-cut a familistic
582 order. In India, for instance, it is immediately recognizable to the sociologist; for Hindu society incorporates into religious or formal law much of the social custom which other civilizations allow to flow on unheeded, unrecognized and unplanned. There, a lower caste often marries its daughters into the ranks of the next immediately above. The practice is known as hypergamy.

In Western Europe hypergamy is present, in some times and places notably so. The French have recognized it realistically. And here in rural Ireland, the countryman practises it, when he can, though he would be much surprised to hear his efforts on behalf of his daughter so pedantically described. Yet even though the name would mystify him, he would understand the substance of the custom. His daughter is to be married in such a way as to bring credit and alliance to the paternal line upon the farm. That line stands to

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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gain a foothold in the world of shops. For that, the countryman is willing, currently, to pay about twice the usual dowry-price.

And in his willing adherence to custom, stability is achieved. The relationship between class and class, like that in the countryside between kindred and kindred, attains some permanence of form. The bride carries social bonds with her; in this case she carries them upward and townward into the shops and pubs of metropolis.

Her brother, on the other hand, carries with him another social function, in his capacity of male. His place is that of a potential fatherhood in a line of patrilineal descent. He carries on a corporate name upon the land or shop. Where he cannot inherit, in such descent, a sure place among his fellows, he must win it. The man is the bread-winner who carves out a place for his line; round him the family must be grouped. The woman, on the other hand, is the uniting force within the grouping. In this dichotomization of social role between the sexes, the Irish town and the Irish countryside, like the Church to which they both subscribe, are agreed. Hypergamy takes its form in the agreement. Along the lines laid down by the social bonds of apprenticeship and hypergamous marriage, the world of the market-town and the rural hinterland are united; along the same lines the flow of the country-people townward moves.

Once again, then, we see how complete the in-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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369 443 571 582 clusions of a familistic order are. The shop lives on and renews its strength. Its owner, whether he be townsman bred or migrant country lad, must 'bring a country girl into the shop'. Marriage, the establishment of a clientele, and the attainment of full status in one's class, all converge at a single point.

182 369 443 571 584 This order, one must not forget, is nothing esoteric; it is no more mysterious in the towns than it is in the countryside. Habit, sentiment and desire among the constituent human beings, both make it up and are made up by it. It is really the pattern into which all these melt to make a coherency of social life. Nowhere is this fact better illustrated than in the attitudes the Irish townsmen hold about their own positions within this inclusive pattern. For example, I give you the statement of one townsman, of shopkeeper rank, who could summarize the matrimonial aspirations of his fellows in terms of likes and desires. To us he may seem very conservative and early Victorian in his standards; but he is none the less aware of the demands life makes upon his kind:

"When a shopkeeper marries he wants to get a wife who can help him in the shop. He doesn't want one who has grand ideas about what a fine lady she is, because she is no good in the house and will only drive the customers away. That is why he goes to the country to find a wife. The country girl has been reared alongside her mother, she knows how

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

people together. Seasonal festivals celebrating the major operations of the agricultural calendar are a primary part of peasant life: thus spring and autumn were the main fair seasons. In the licence permitted at these gatherings we may detect an echo of the ritual of fertility magic designed to ensure the success of seedtime and harvest. 181 443 796

Sympathetic magic, already present in the minds of the cave-artists of the Old Stone Age, who painted life-like pictures of animals in the hope of good hunting, may be defined as the symbolic carrying out of certain deeds in order to promote success in another field of action. A peasant community is fully conscious of its dependence on the powers that bring rain and sunshine: these powers must be conciliated and encouraged. In the face of the untamed ocean in particular, man's superstitious regard for the menace of nature dies hard, while the survival of wakes for the dead, of the veneration of trees, wells and standing stones, of customs concerning cattle and fire, is a lasting tribute to the power of magic. 181 789

From the sociological view-point the idea of sympathetic magic has had an important consequence in the tendency, common to all peasantries, to regard child-bearing as part of the ritual necessary to bring success in cultivation. The large families of rural Ireland are one aspect of this; another is the ill-omen attached to unmarried women. Barrenness tends to be regarded as a curse and a disgrace. But the years since the famine have seen great changes in the ages of marriage—the average of 29 for Irish women is one of the highest in the world—and in the proportions between the sexes: this is a subject badly in need of investigation. Statistical and economic studies we must have, but we need also to regard man as something more than a profit-making being. Peasant society is only to a limited extent drawn into the world of money: rural debts are often merely the sign of a social obligation. It is with the maintenance and continuity of society that the peasant community is concerned: hence its importance for the future of civilisation. 181 842 181 [582]

While communal schemes and the manifold rights and duties of the peasant have been disturbed by landlordism and 181 496

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

(E.) *Health.*—Taken as a whole, the people may be said to be a healthy one. Serious diseases, apart from accidents incident to their callings, are but few in number; and the general physique of the people speaks to a healthy active life.

Consanguineous Unions.—A large proportion of the marriages come under this heading, including not only those of persons within the prohibited degrees, for which dispensations are obtained, but also those which take place between people who are related in some recognisable but hardly nameable degree. Cases of the first class, or those which require dispensations, are of frequent occurrence, but seldom or never take place between persons nearer of kin than third cousins. The other cases, of course, are the most common of all, as from the size of the population and its isolated position, every family must, after a few generations, become more or less related to every other. Marriages with strangers, though more numerous of late years, are not common. The uniformity of strain does not appear to have produced any effect except the great similarity of appearance already noticed (p. 322); no cases of malformation or congenital disease are ascribed to it.

Diseases.—For most of the following facts I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. P. J. Hart, the medical officer of the islands, who, besides affording me much valuable information relative to the people and their ailments, the result of his long experience of them, kindly allowed me to look over his notes of cases. The main diseases may be classed as follows:—

Insanity.—There is at present no case of this among the natives of the islands, nor has there been one since 1888 when a case which, however, was not of long duration, occurred in Inishshark.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Properly speaking there is no idiocy; but there are two cases in which the persons, though shrewd and sharp enough about most of their own affairs, yet show signs of mental want in a sufficient degree to amount to slight imbecility.

Epilepsy is not common, but two cases are known in one of which the patient is subject to delusions, and always states, after a fit, that he has been with the fairies on the mainland. Of the other no information could be obtained except that the patient had had "fits."

Deaf-mutism has not been known for years on either island, but a case of temporary dumbness occurred on Inishshark in 1892.

Blindness is equally rare, there being but one case, a man over sixty years of age who acquired it late in life.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen
● 582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

844 Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if
763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their
764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great
[762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to
[178] the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin
[482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *caoine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women
764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own
533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

(D.) *Health.*—It was found to be a difficult matter to obtain reliable information on this point, but there seems to be, on the whole, but little serious disease, and the people appear to be strong and healthy. The affections suffered from are mainly due to the nature of their food and occupations, and the unwholesome state of their dwellings. 164

Consanguineous Marriages.—The intermarriage of relations seems to be very common, not only on the islands, but also on the mainland, where it is most common in small fishing hamlets difficult of access, such as Fallmore, Tip, and Portacloy. While visiting Inishkea inquiries were made as to these unions, and several of the inhabitants assured me that intermarriage between the people of the North and South Islands was not common, it being a far more usual thing for the islanders to marry people from the opposite shore of the Mullet; thus, the South Island people seem to intermarry a good deal with the inhabitants of Fallmore, a very primitive village at the extreme end of the peninsula, which has only being provided with a road, such as it is, since 1881. On both islands, however, the majority of the marriages seem to take place between members of the community. 582

It does not seem as if it were usual for first cousins to marry, but matches between relatives of all degrees farther out seem to be of very common occurrence.

Through the kindness of the Rev. H. Hewson, P.P. of Belmullet, I am enabled to give actual figures, as he has kept the record of dispensations for these marriages since 1875; from that date until August, 1894, there were in the Parish of Kilmore, which contains about 700 families, altogether 276 marriages, and of these 61 or 22·1 per cent. obtained dispensations, as the parties were relatives. In the Parish of Belmullet, number of families 460, there were in the same period 247 with 26 consanguineous (or 10·5 per cent.) and Kilcommon, with about 620 families, had 276 marriages, for 72 of which, or 26·1 per cent., dispensations were granted. The average in the whole three parishes was thus 19·5 per cent. To these may be added some 10 or 12 more cases of marriages of first cousins dispensed by the bishop of the diocese. There does not seem to be any marked result from this long continued close intermarriage, except the very marked local types observable in the more isolated places, which seem to have been fixed or preserved by this cause. This is especially the case in the islands whose inhabitants, while bearing a general resemblance to each other, differ much in appearance from their neighbours of the mainland. 582 588

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

114 141 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 582 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

Diseases.—The following account is believed to be correct, though, 164 as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

[158] *Insanity.*—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

[273] The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may probably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than 732 two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet. 164 Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally [501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

Fevers.—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter 164 being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

trade in 1825.[1] Formerly it was at the fair that country folk purchased the specialized goods that could not be home-produced—edged tools, vessels of wood and metal, pieces of delph, and such colourful trivialities as beads and ribbons. The pole-lathe on which wooden vessels for the dairy were turned was known in early Christian times if not before, and a few examples are still in use. It seems probable that the turners once utilized a living branch as a spring-pole, like the bodgers of the Chilterns. At any rate we read of Co. Meath, early last century, that 'turners and wooden dish-makers generally build a hut in a wood that is being cut, and reside there while the timber is felling, buying and working those kind of trees most suited to their purpose and paying for them as the manufactured goods are sold'.[2] Today the turner selects and fells his own trees, preferably sycamore, and works them up in his own yard.

The churn-maker also had his stand at the fair, and there were the noggin-weavers and sieve-makers, the carvers of ladles, wooden spoons and butter prints (Fig. 89), and the makers of baskets and creels. Here also forgathered the beggars and ballad-singers, fiddlers, pedlars, gamesters, and the trouble-makers and the match-makers. It was a recognized practice for a bachelor to be on the look-out for a mate, or for a match-maker if things had gone far enough, and for the men of one parish to seek to settle old scores with enemies from another parish. There is some evidence that trial marriage contracts, binding for a year, were at one time an accompaniment of the fairs. Like the Scottish hand-fasting, the system allowed the husband to test the usefulness and fertility of the wife. Nor should we forget the games and horse-racing, and into the nineteenth century the cock-fighting and bull-baiting, which have long been associated with the great fairs.

Down to fairly recent times all the fairs were held on saints' days or at the movable feasts of Easter and Whitsun, and if the saint was a local one the fair, as at Kilorglin, was also a pattern, that is a festival associated with the patron saint. Unless the church has been able to keep a firm hold on the proceedings, these patterns have degenerated until many of

[1] See also De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's Walk through Ireland, 1796–97*, 250.
[2] R. Thompson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Meath*, 253.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XX

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

582 178 731 776 THE average age of marriage among Irish countrywomen, about 28, is said to be higher than in any other country in the world: that of the men is higher still, and in addition there are many who never marry. These are among the demographic consequences of the economic and social changes which followed the Great Famine of 1845–47, for down to that time the mass of the population had nothing to lose and everything to gain by marrying young. Among the economic factors which led to the postponement of marriage may be mentioned the rising standards of living, the prohibition of the subdivision of holdings so that only one son could inherit, and the need for larger farms consequent on the decline of subsistence farming and the increase of pastoral husbandry, which meant that the peasant had to look and plan ahead. Equally important, I believe, was the effect of the crisis of the famine in breaking down patterns of behaviour which had continued with little change since prehistoric times. The elder faiths were rudely shattered so that today we have only the broken remnants left, stray survivals which have lost their meaning in a modern setting. The scattering of the fairy hosts is the constant lament of old people for whose parents they were a reality. Over large parts of the country, down to famine times the fairies (among them the ancestral spirits), and the powers of nature in sun and stone, tree, flower and welling water were ruling forces whose malice must somehow be averted, and whose beneficence must be courted by magical acts. Nature's reproductive surplus on which [842] human life depended could best be assured by breeding children to capacity.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

The Irish birthrate remains high, and despite delayed marriages the population would continue to increase were it not for emigration, latterly to Britain instead of America. Moreover, sterility is still regarded as a disgrace, and superstitious practices find one of their last pathetic appeals in attempts to be cured of 'the sterile curse'. Among a peasant people a childless marriage is an economic and social tragedy. There is some evidence that, in the north of Ireland at least, trial marriage or bed-fellowship (bundling), as in Wales, the Hebrides, Norway and Holland was an accepted preliminary of marriage and a means to which the fertility of a prospective partner was tested. The reliability of the notorious Richard Twiss as a witness may be impugned, but in this instance his account of the custom in Co. Fermanagh is likely to be true[1] since there are living traditions of trial marriages in Counties Antrim and Londonderry.

For the most part, these immemorial attitudes did not survive the crisis of the famine and the watchfulness of a now well-organized priesthood. The fertility rites of wakes for the dead and the unashamed courtships which were carried on at patterns and at the great seasonal festivals find a plausible explanation in the fact that they occurred at times and places where the spirits of the dead were waiting to be reborn. The gatherings at hill-top burial places attested by tradition and the legendary histories were similarly drawn together by the pull of ancestral spirits. The name Dermot and Grania's Bed which is applied to many megalithic graves gives these ancient monuments a reputation which is evident in a belief recorded by Hely Dutton in Co. Clare early in the last century: 'If a woman proves barren, a visit with her husband to Dermot and Grania's Bed certainly cures her.'[2] And the Saints' Beds associated with many ancient church sites have taken over some of the megalithic magic, for they have the power of curing of barrenness a woman who spends the night there.

If the youthful marriages of pre-famine days seem far removed from the carefully arranged matches of the present-day peasantry, it should not be concluded that they were casual and

[1] R. Twiss, *A Tour in Ireland in 1775*, 108.
[2] H. Dutton, *Clare*, 318.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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583 [581] matter of form to make valid the marriage.'[1] After the famine, at least, the mutual attraction of the suitors themselves was a secondary consideration. An ill-favoured girl could be made pretty with a dowry of cows or its equivalent in cash, known in the west as 'dry-money'. A marriage between near relatives was not unknown if it meant keeping the name on the land or enlarging the patrimony: 'a blanket is the better of being doubled,' it was said. 'We are all related one way or another' is a comment one hears in isolated mountain districts. In general romantic love was the luxury of the landless, but whatever the motives of marriage there were many charms and omens to be taken into account in winning a person's affections, and some of the magic devices to which a girl might resort are listed in one of Bryan Merryman's poems of the late eighteenth century:

[539]

> Up the chimney stuck the flail
> Slept with a spade without avail,
> Hid my wool in the limekiln late
> And my distaff behind the churchyard gate;
> Flax in the road to halt coach and carriage,
> And haycocks stuffed with heads of cabbage.[2]

582 To this day the marriage or remarriage of old men to young women is regarded as unnatural and wrong, perhaps because it complicates the question of succession. In Co. Wexford, and probably elsewhere, unpopular marriages of this kind are marked by noisy gatherings of young men who serenade the married couple with horn-blowing. A similar custom, the *vito*, is well-known in Andalusia, where it includes the ringing of cow-bells and the singing of scurrilous songs. One of the strangest traditional features of Irish weddings is the visitation of 'straw-boys', that is youths wearing straw masks who attend as uninvited guests and disport themselves at the dance which normally follows a wedding (Fig. 88). I am told that they may still be seen occasionally in Co. Cavan and parts of the west. Formerly the visitors also wore straw suits or white shirts and red petticoats decorated with coloured ribbons. The leader

585 [292]

[1] Wood-Martin, *The Elder Faiths*, 2, 82.
[2] *The Midnight Court*, translated by Frank O'Connor (1945).

16: Messenger

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• 582

[For information pertaining to the marriage patterns abroad of emigrants from Inis Beag, see 16: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, pp. 130-131.]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

521 203 591 is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a [511] raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events [512] and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

626 Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have [638] witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took [639] advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on [123] the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

Courtship and Marriage

582 589 162 Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 582 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

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declining steadily, and between 1951 and 1960 there were only nine marriages between folk who remained in the island—and since then but five. 582

The prevalence of celibacy and late marriage is a matter of grave concern to the people. My analysis of these phenomena reveals over 20 contributing factors, of which I will consider only the most important—and these briefly, since most of them will be addressed further within the contexts of the family, personality, and emigration. The one most often voiced by the islanders is the emigration of girls in increasing numbers at younger ages; of the nine girls eligible for marriage, only one is older than 25 years, and several are contemplating emigration. The folk are much less prone to talk of the single estate and late marriage than they are of emigration, which share many of the same causes, and they appear to know fewer of the causes of the former and are less willing to assign relative weights when assessing them. The cause of all three conditions most often cited by both writers and social scientists is the system of inheritance, whereby land cannot be subdivided but is passed on to one son who must wait to marry until his father dies or is willing (or forced) to pass on the land, and his siblings have married or emigrated. By this time, the son is usually middle-aged and cautious in making his choice of a spouse. Most fathers in Inis Beag are loath to surrender their property, and with it control of the family, to sons wishing to marry, and some even will postpone receiving the old age in order to maintain their status position past the age of 70 years. A father who does not choose a successor among several sons until late in his life—which is a common occurrence—can retard their marriages if they choose to "wait it out." Equally loath to disturb the family *status quo* is the mother, who fears not only the loss of her commanding position in the household, but the loss of her son's affection to an incoming daughter-in-law. The man who wishes to marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of gossip, and his plight is regarded as a "shame." 582 589 829 [167] 582 589 428 593 [388]

Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. That the folk are aware of this cause is attested by their frequent advice to offspring that they postpone marriage to conform to island tradition. This advice invariably is buttressed by a rationale of males not having enough "sense" to marry until they approach the age of 40 years. Reflected in the rationale is the system of male age grading conceptualized in Inis Beag: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until 40 years of age, an adult until 60 years, middle-aged until 80, and old-aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). Another rationale for late marriage often heard in Inis Beag is the impossibility of divorce in Catholic Ireland, which demands that the choice of a spouse be well considered. It appears that this argument is usually used to explain late marriage when other factors are in fact responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades. 582 175 829 [501] [586]

Two closely linked causes of celibacy and late marriage seldom broached in Inis Beag are male solidarity and the unwillingness of many men to accept the responsibilities of marriage, particularly its sexual responsibilities. Marriage is looked on with trepidation, or at least as something less than desirable. The marriageable man in his late twenties and thirties is usually sexually repressed to an unbelieve- 582 589 581 562 [593] [154]

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able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céili*, held on a large flagging near the school, and sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several manifestations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleambnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drinking and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleambnas*, but now the service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

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Numerous factors are weighed by the representatives of the future spouses before a match is consummated. Uppermost in the minds of the relatives of the man is the size of the dowry that the woman will bring to the marriage. In the decade 1951 to 1960, the average dowry was 50 to 60 pounds, but at least one reached 100 pounds. This sum now is used to finance the wedding party, but once it went to provide the passage and "settling in" money for an emigrating sibling, to furnish the dowry for a daughter, or to make life more comfortable for the aging parents. Land and capital (and other status attributes soon to be discussed) possessed by the father or widowed mother of the man are the focal concern of the woman's relatives during matchmaking. Among the factors which enter into the deliberations of both bargaining parties are: the presence in either family line of mental illness or other afflictions which can stigmatize, the economic skills and industriousness of the potential spouses, the number of cognates (relatives on all sides of ego limited only by degree of kinship) which compose the two kin-groups and their propensity to assist and defend (and not to engage in disputes), and the mutual attraction of body and personality of the future spouses. The folk believe that young persons approaching marriage "should have known each other for a long spell" and that "the two should be alike"—as to family position, education, and temperament. It is common for a woman to choose not to marry a man to whom she may be attracted because his mother is overly jealous and domineering, or there are "too many old people in the house."

Most weddings take place on Tuesday during the hour before noon, at the direction of the curate, but at one time they were conducted between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, so that the guests could hurry back to the groom's house "to make a night of it;" the morning ceremony means that festivities commence in mid-afternoon and the party often is "stale by nightfall." Each family invites its circle of relatives and friends who congregate at the respective domiciles in the morning, where the men are served whiskey. The groom's entourage then accompanies him to the house of the bride, and another "round" is proffered them before the procession is formed for the journey to the chapel and back. Three men lead the column at some distance from the bride and groom, to ward off those with the evil eye or any other malignant forces which might threaten the couple. Close behind the bride and groom are the "best man" and "maid of honor," followed in order by the two fathers, male guests in a group, and at the end female guests; the two mothers do not attend the wedding, nor does the bride's mother participate in the matchmaking or allow her daughter to return home until a month following the nuptials (Formerly, she did not enter her daughter's house until a grandchild was born.).

Grooms long have worn mainland attire for the ceremony, but only in 1960 did the first bride do so. Before then, the woman wore a new blue petticoat, accouterments purchased in shops at a nearby mainland port, and a shawl for the first time, draped over the shoulders. Her hair had remained uncut until this day, and she and the groom wore borrowed items of clothing—she usually the shawl and he a coat or tie—to bring luck to their marriage. During the nuptial service, the man not only places a ring on the finger of his bride, but gives her seven shillings with which to buy later a holy picture, or some other object of her

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Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no 'responsibilities.'"

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

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three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual economic and emotional support.

When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access. The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser," filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs, or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines --with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

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(Humphreys 1965:245). A far more forceful statement is that of Marvin K. Opler and Jerome L. Singer, wherein they address the etiology and consequences of the Oedipus configuration in the Irish family:

> The central figure in Irish families is more likely to be a controlling figure on the distaff side, while fathers, especially in straitened economic circumstances, are frequently by contrast shadowy and evanescent. . . . An Irish male . . . beset with anxiety and fear of female figures early in life, and lacking possibilities of firm male identification with a father, would later experience the sexual repressions and socio-religious definitions of marriage and sexuality for which his culture, with its high celibacy rates, protracted engagements, and sin-guilt emphasis, is justly famous. . . . all this spells a final anxious and fearful lack of positive sexual identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. . . . Irish resistance to role identification . . . was seen as . . . having the imprint of anxiety in relations with persons of the opposite sex, ordinarily mothers and older sisters. . . . [The] . . . basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt . . . (Opler and Singer 1956:15-18).

Complementing the Oedipus complex is male solidarity, which has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend, historical sources, and modern literature. Psychologists of Freudian bent see male solidarity as one of the many behavioral manifestations of the Oedipus configuration—based on "male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females," and "latent homosexual feelings;" but many anthropologists (especially functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies where the Oedipus complex appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania* (completed in 1912), alludes to the "tragic plight" of many Irish women, past and present:

> *Grania* is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . it is not Finn alone who robs Grania of Diarmuid. "His desire was all the time with you yourself, and Almhuin." Almhuin, the charmed circle of hunters and warriors; its modern equivalent was the masculine society of clubs and bars, of wit and talk and stimulus, from which a woman . . . would be forever excluded . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things beside them and do not really care for them at all. . . . A woman has only to put her nose into a saloon bar . . . to realize that Almhuin is with us still (Coxhead 1961:145–146).

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Despite sexual repression and the complaints of wives about large families, children are much desired by parents, and the fertility rate in Inis Beag is extremely high. An examination of 109 marriages between 1891 and 1960 reveals that the average number of offspring per couple is 6.4 (7.2 for marriages in which the wife has passed the menopause); this figure excludes spouses who are barren. The range in family size is between 1 and 16 offspring, and 18 of the 109 marriages have produced 7 children—the modal unit. Today, 6 couples are childless and as a result are "pitied" by their neighbors, who hold that it is the females who are sterile. At least 2 women, to my wife's knowledge, have been examined by obstetricians on the mainland and been found fecund; but they have been unable to persuade their spouses of the medical fact or get them to consult the doctors themselves. Men are anxious about their own maleness, as evidenced in the ability to produce offspring in this case, and have an eye to aid in their labors and to descent, succession, and inheritance. Women desire children, in part, to compensate for the lack of attention and affection from their mates.

Most of the enculturation during infancy and childhood in Inis Beag is done by mothers, as men are away much of the time and, if at home, "don't like to mind the kids." Mothers favor their sons, whom they "overprotect" and to whom they give "seductive" care. In the process of childrearing, sexual interest is first elicited and then blocked by punishing its behavioral manifestations. As a result of the mother's close ties to the male child, the father often is alienated from familial interaction, is hostile toward the youth, and fails to become a source of firm masculine attachment. Disliking to fulfill the responsibilities of enculturation and often in conflict with both his wife and male offspring, the father forces his mate to project herself into her role as childrearer to gain solace, and thus the cycle repeats itself. Although fathers tend to favor their daughters, their desire to "escape" the home discourages a pronounced Electra complex from arising. The bond between mother and son is so binding that it is not infrequent for marriage to be postponed after the death of the father, and the son to work the holding for his widowed mother until he has reached the age of confirmed bachelorhood. "This is also the basis for the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law that is quite intense in Ireland, the prospect of which leads so many sons to refuse 'to bring another woman in on my mother'" (Humphreys 1965:246)

Within marriage, husbands tend to relate themselves to their wives as they have to their mothers when single. The wife is the "strong" person in the household, on whom the husband is emotionally dependent even when their relationship is one of mutual withdrawal and uncooperativeness. In most households, the wife shares at least equally in decision-making, and in many the husband bows to his spouse's decisions, not only in minor matters but in affairs of utmost importance to the family and those relating to activities normally within the male sphere, such as farming. It is the wife who invariably handles the money in the household. Freudians would see the influence of the mother image in the realm of sex: the rarity of conjugal love, the lack of sexual foreplay marked by little or no concern with the female breast, the brevity of the coital act and the frequent spurning of the woman following it, the need to degrade the female in the sexual act, and the

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796 627 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is [574] done, for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [351] a new *criot* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for [262] the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [364] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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are those who are either indifferent to the rapid increase in emigration since 1946, or welcome it. The island has its bitter critics, even among a few of the oldest generation who regret not having emigrated when they had the opportunity. A noted craftsman, long disillusioned with island existence, is refusing to train any of his sons to carry on the family tradition of generations. English is spoken as much as Irish in the presence of children in some households so as to prepare them for eventual emigration, in spite of the protestations of some priests and neighbors who insist that the alien tongue not be spoken on moral and nativistic grounds. The language revival movement receives much criticism because it results in emigrants being placed at a disadvantage; a frequently heard utterance in Inis Beag, even among those who hesitate to use English before their offspring, is, "What good will Irish do a person?" It is customary now for emigrating youths with inadequate command of English to spend three months to a year in a mainland community—with relatives or at a job—before going on to England or America. On the mainland, they also overcome some of their shyness and feelings of inferiority and become acquainted with Western customs absent from Inis Beag.

Islanders Abroad

My wife and I obtained some emigration statistics for the siblings of all folk now living in Inis Beag. For 289 persons who emigrated between 1891 and 1958, we assembled accurate data on: community settled in abroad, occupation, marriage age, place of origin and religion of spouse, and number of offspring. Of these 289, 4.8 percent went to neighboring islands, mostly to marry; 28.0 percent to the mainland (permanently rather than to prepare for emigration from Ireland); 42.8 percent to the United States; 22.8 percent to England; 1.0 percent to Australia; and 0.6 percent to Canada and other countries. The shift of emigration from the United States to England after the Second World War is revealed by the following statistics: between 1891 and 1945, 72.4 percent of Inis Beag emigrants went to the United States and only 10.6 percent to England; but between 1946 and 1958, emigration to the United States dropped to 25.5 percent, while to England it increased to 45.1 percent. The fact that before 1946 approximately 16 percent of the islanders who emigrated remained in Ireland as compared to 28 percent after that date attests to the increasing properity in their homeland as well as abroad.

It is beyond the scope of this work to follow Inis Beag emigrants of the past and present to their destinations abroad and beyond; the causes, conditions, and consequences of emigration from Ireland to America and England are amply documented in such standard works as Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger*, George W. Potter's *To the Golden Door*, William V. Shannon's *The American Irish*, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration*, and John A. Jackson's *The Irish in Britain*. But, in closing chapter and book, I would like to discuss two additional sets of statistics which have an important bearing on Inis Beag culture and personality and which, as far as I know, have never been compiled systematically for any body of emigrants from a particular locality of Ireland. One

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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set deals with the place of origin and the religion of men and women whom islanders marry outside of Ireland, and the other concerns the frequency of marriage among those who have left the country.

Emigrants from Inis Beag have settled, for the most part, in Irish ethnic communities—near relatives—in large cities and their environs of the United States, England, Australia, and Canada. In the United States, these are greater Boston, Hartford, greater New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Oakland. The majority of them have had their transportation overseas paid for by relatives who emigrated before them and in whose communities they have made their new homes, and the first order of business for the newcomers is to repay the loans made to them for the journey. Of the first generation arrivals, 37.4 percent of them did not marry; of the remainder, 10.7 percent married fellow Inis Beag emigrants, 14.3 percent persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands, 40 percent Irish from the mainland, 8.9 percent Irish-Americans of the second generation and beyond, and 9.5 percent non-Irish. The unknown category is 16.6 percent and includes emigrants who no longer are in contact with their families in Inis Beag or who have married Protestants. As to the former, it is common for men to sever relations with their kinsmen at home when their mothers die, and even some daughters do so after they have been abroad a few years, especially those who have married non-Catholics or "foreigners." This reflects the Oedipus complex and religious and ethnic biases in the Inis Beag family, and runs counter to the assumption of nativists, primitivists, and functionalists who stress the strength of family ties in Ireland. The folk claim that no emigrant in human memory has married a Protestant, but I learned from islanders who had settled for many years in American communities of at least six who had done so.

Not only are the folk secretive about those of their number who have married Protestants after emigrating, but also about emigrants who have "lost the faith." By and large, these are young people who have emigrated to England since 1946; it seems that youthful emigrants before that time remained loyal Catholics, as have those who have gone to the United States recently. The widespread disaffection of Irish Catholics in Britain frequently is discussed in Inis Beag, and is blamed on the anonymity and "temptations" provided by the city. The "priest and gossip keep us faithful here" were the words of a man concerned about the rumored disaffection of his son in London.

During my last visit to Inis Beag in 1965, I discussed with over a dozen islanders some of the statistics that I had compiled previously and have reported herein. Without telling them the results of my analysis, I asked them whether more folk remained single in Inis Beag or abroad, and without exception they made the first choice. Their collective opinion is summed up by the remark of one that, "Here the old people interfere. They don't want to give up the land, and they don't want a new girl to come in. In America, the kids make up their own minds." Social scientists long have assumed that when emigrants from Ireland settle elsewhere, they soon come to marry as early and frequently as the people among whom they live, mostly because of changing economic conditions. But a single rate of 37.4 percent abroad, as compared to 28.6 percent in Inis Beag, belies both common and scientific sense. Certainly factors more important than economic ones

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[For information pertaining to emigration and its relation to sexual repression, late marriage, celibacy, and family relations in Ireland, see 17: Messenger, ER6 Rural Irish, category 116, pp. 32-36.]

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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human relationships are few. There is, in fact, little difference in the style of life between the most and the least prosperous of the islanders. The web of kinship rather than the possession of status attributes, for the most part, determines who will interact with whom and in what manner. Land and money are the principal symbols, with formal education and influential relatives (particularly priests, nuns, and teachers), on the mainland and abroad, becoming more important. Two generations ago, strength, courage, economic skills, and musical and storytelling abilities were highly regarded as well, but acculturation has lessened their significance.

Although there are fifty-nine nuclear families, only thirteen surnames exist today. There is much inbreeding, as might be expected, and the church carefully checks the genealogies of prospective spouses to ascertain their degree of consanguinity. Courtship is almost nonexistent, and most marriages are arranged with little concern for the desires of the young people involved. Late marriage and celibacy are as prevalent in Inis Beag as elsewhere in Ireland. The average marriage age for men is thirty-six and for women twenty-five, and 29 percent of those persons eligible for marriage are single.[3] The functions of the family are mainly economic and reproductive, and conjugal love is extremely rare. A sharp dichotomy exists between the sexes; both before and after marriage men interact mostly with men and women with women. The average family has seven offspring, and many women are unhappy about being forced by the unauthorized decree of local priests to produce as many children as possible. They feel that the constant bearing and rearing of offspring increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty of their families. Jealousy of the greater freedom of men is commonly expressed by women who have many young children. Mothers bestow a considerable amount of attention and affection on their offspring, especially on their sons. However, tensions between fathers and sons which develop in childhood often flare into scarcely repressed hostility

[3] Twenty-nine percent of those islanders of marriageable age are single. This rises to a high of 37 percent among first and second generation Inis Beag emigrants, indicating the actions of more than just economic causes. Irish scholars, for obvious reasons, tend to stress economic and other (climate, race, English oppression, the famine, loss of the Irish tongue, etc.) monistic causes in their analyses of culture and personality phenomena. Inadequate statistics for second and third generation migrants from Inis Beag suggest that the celibacy rate lowers markedly only when descendants of immigrants dissociate themselves from Irish ethnic communities and Irish-American priests. Ethnographic research is sorely needed among Irish of several generations in the countries to which they have migrated to probe this and other phenomena.

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identification, varying in a continuum from repressed and latent homosexual balances through to added displacements and distortions that are either pallid asexuality or fearful and bizarre misidentifications. Since the culture does not condone sexual expression or postpones and then rigidly defines it in marriage . . . latent homosexual balances [were hypothesized] for this group, no overtly sought interpersonal manifestations, and a facade of asexual misogyny varied only by the most personalized and bizarre female identifications. . . . [The] basic personality has stamped into it such feelings as male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and the kind of latent homosexual feelings which produce a further sense of sin and guilt (Opler and Singer 1956: 15–18).

Among the seven diagnostic variables utilized by the researchers, the Irish patients ranked highest in the "Sin, Sex, and Guilt Ideology" (93 percent of the sample) and "Homosexuality Types" (90 percent of the sample latent, none overt) categories.

Complementing the Oedipus complex in the etiology of sexual puritanism is male solidarity. It has a long history in Ireland—revealed in legend and modern literature alike—and is instrumental in delaying marriage and making for marital maladjustment. Freudian psychologists see it as one of the many possible by-products of the "universal" Oedipus complex—"male inadequacy, the masculine protest, hostility toward females, and . . . latent homosexual feelings"; but many anthropologists (especially structural-functionalists) analyze it as a sociocultural phenomenon, for it is found in societies in which the Oedipal configuration appears not to exist. Elizabeth Coxhead, in discussing Lady Gregory's play, *Grania,* alludes to the tragic plight of most Irish women, past and present.

Grania is . . . a play in which a woman is ousted from an emotional relationship between two men. The "love" is that of man for man, of brother for brother; it is loyalty to the warrior band, and a corresponding resentment of the woman who takes away the warrior's freedom, makes trouble with his comrades, distracts him from his purpose in life. It is an attitude which filters through the play as light filters through crystal; which runs through the heroic Irish sagas. . . . Its continuing validity was borne out by all Lady Gregory had observed in the world around her, the world of the "loveless Irishman," the peasant society which relegated women to serfdom, the middle-class intellectual society which left them only donkey-work. . . . such a view of the Irishwoman's role, of her relegation to insignificance and her resentment under it, is not exclusively feminine. It is abundantly confirmed by Synge. His heroines . . . are creatures caged and raging, given no scope for their powers, condemned to love men who are poor things

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HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

I have already touched tangentially on some of the historical and broad cultural implications of sexual puritanism, in Ireland as well as Inis Beag. In this final section, I will examine the perennially addressed phenomena of late marriage, celibacy, and emigration, in their island setting, with special reference to the factor of sexual repression.

In a population of 350, 116 persons are married, 13 are widows, 3 are widowers, and 33 males over twenty-three years of age and 21 females over seventeen are single. Since marriage occurs between twenty-four and forty-five for men and eighteen and thirty-two for women, on the basis of past statistics, only 18 men and 9 women are eligible for marriage. As mentioned earlier, the average marriage age for males is thirty-six and for females twenty-five. My wife and I isolated almost two dozen interrelated causes of late marriage and the prevalence of bachelor and spinsterhood. The most emphasized cause in Ireland is the pattern of inheritance: one son, usually the eldest, must wait until the father is ready to pass on his patrimony and his own siblings have married or emigrated. In an attempt to alleviate the situation somewhat, a law today requires that to receive the "old-age" (pension) a man at seventy must will his property to a son, or other appropriate person. This cause is important in Inis Beag, although primogeniture is not so well defined (of those sons inheriting property, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and later). Inis Beag fathers are loath to surrender their land and control of the household to their sons and will often play off the sons, one against another, in order to achieve favored treatment for their wives and themselves in their waning years. Occasionally this procedure "backfires": the sons, acting in concert, emigrate together, and an increasing amount of land lies idle because of this.

Equally loath to disturb the family status quo, island mothers will often resist incoming daughters-in-law, who threaten not only their commanding position but the loss of their sons' affection. Mothers whom we have interviewed in Inis Beag and elsewhere in Ireland display the extreme of Oedipal attachment when they rejoice in their sons' decision

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to join the priesthood; not only are spiritual blessings and prestige brought to the family as a result, but their sons are at last removed from potential wives. Yet the Inis Beag man who wants to marry and is prevented from doing so by domineering and jealous parents is the subject of much gossip. Outwardly, at least, his plight is considered a "shame."

To the man in his late twenties and thirties who is secure in his home and has established regularized patterns of conduct (and has a mother who acts in most ways as a wife surrogate), the general responsibilities of marriage, and specifically its sexual responsibility, are factors militating against his seeking a spouse. Some men who have land, the consent of their parents, and willing "sweethearts" will balk at a match because they are too happy "running with the lads," and if persuaded to marry, they will try to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage. It was hinted to my wife and me on several occasions that particular island celibates almost married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment too difficult to make at the last moment.

Three other causes of late marriage and the single estate in Inis Beag must be mentioned. Girls are more dissatisfied with their future lot than are boys and men and are emigrating at ever younger ages, thus sharply reducing the number of eligible females. During the 1950–1959 period, the average age at which girls emigrate dropped below twenty-one years. Each year more of them attend schools on the mainland and thus are more exposed to stimuli which promote emigration. Mothers are puzzled at the increasing exodus of their daughters, since women today have a far easier time than they did a generation or two ago; but some are glad to see them escape the drudgery and boredom of island existence. Since late marriage has been a persistent phenomenon in Ireland since the great famine, it has become institutionalized and serves as an expectation for young people. We heard Inis Beag adults assert that marriage should be postponed to conform to island mores; this usually was buttressed by a rationale of males not having "enough sense" to marry until they are nearly forty years of age. Reflected in this rationale is the male age-grading conceptualized by the folk: a man is a "boy" or "lad" until forty, an adult until sixty, middle-aged until eighty, and aged after that (exhilarating to the American anthropologist approaching forty who comes from a society obsessed with the "cult of youth"). A final cause, often articulated by the islanders, is the fact that divorce is impossible in Ireland, therefore the choice of a spouse must be well considered. It

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appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis